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LB 386

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Wickersham. Senator Wehrbein, you're recognized for discussion on the advancement of LB 386.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes, Mr. President, and members of the body. I also am speaking to support LB 386. I recognize that it is going to be an increasing dilemma on the costs of the various bills coming across, and I've spoken to many of those, and it is going to amount to where you believe your priorities should be. I look at this with three particular points in mind. One is that it is continuing technology for our young people across this state. This was prioritized...was highly recommended by the NITC, Information Technology Commission, that we have put in place to study technology and to recommend...make recommendations for the possible use across the state. Something, I think, is needed for the infrastructure of the schools as an access for them, as a way to access technology, probably helping all schools across the state more than perhaps even the populated areas which would have some way to probably access some of that on their own. The other thing is, I know it's the money and here, again, General Fund money. Once again, I think you're going to have to make the decision of what priorities the state should have, as we certainly have many good ideas on our plate. That will eventually have to sort itself out come late May. It seemed to me that this ought to be one. It's one of the things that we've been in a long time in this state, obviously, education of our young people. I believe that this should be one of those priorities. The other things is that it is...if it isn't direct property tax relief, it's at least saving the property tax from being spent in this area. We've had several discussions on this, obviously, in the last couple of years, and we've said that we're going to try to reduce our dependency on property tax. If we're going to have our schools continue to do what we want them to do, particularly in the area of technology, it looks like we...it behooves us to support that through General Funds and, therefore, I do support LB 386 and will be supporting the A bill accordingly. Whether you agree with technology for or not, in total, we've had many discussions privately and publicly about information explosion, the technology explosion we're having. It appears to me that not one of us, let alone 49 of us, can stop that explosion